

What You Can Do to Improve Mecklenburg County's Air Quality



Ozone and particle pollution, the two biggest air quality concerns in Mecklenburg County, originate from many of the same sources, primarily motor vehicles. Reducing energy consumption also helps reduce air pollution. If less gasoline, natural gas and electricity (power plants burn fossil fuels to generate electricity) are used, not only do your bills decrease but less pollutants are emitted. Our individual activities create air pollution, and all of us have the power to improve air quality through our actions. Keep the following tips in mind:



In Your Car or Truck

- Reduce/stop vehicle idling: letting an engine idle wastes gas and increases pollution, and idling can damage your vehicle more than shutting off and re-starting your engine.
- Keep vehicles in good working condition. Dirty fuel filters and catalytic converters require the vehicle to use more fuel. Well-maintained engines are more fuel-efficient and pollute less.
- Keep your tires properly inflated; you'll save gas and reduce tire wear too.
- Refuel after 6 pm when ground-level ozone is least likely to form. Don't top off the tank, and make sure the gas cap fits properly. Otherwise, ozone-causing fumes can escape.
- Travel at moderate speeds. A vehicle pollutes less at 55 mph than at 65 or 70 mph.
- Plan ahead to combine short trips. Fewer trips produce less air pollution.
- Drive the cleanest car that fits your lifestyle – check out [eCarmony: Green Vehicle Compatibility Quiz](#) to find your perfect match!



At Home

- Install a programmable thermostat to save energy (and money) when you are away or asleep.
- Insulate your home to cut down on heating and cooling.
- Run dishwashers and washing machines only with full loads.
- Turn off unused lights, appliances and computers.
- Wash clothes in cold water.
- Apply paint with rollers and brushes instead of sprays to cut down on fumes and save paint.
- Use water-based paints and cleaners instead of solvent-based products.
- Buy energy-efficient appliances and use compact fluorescent or LED light bulbs.
- Recycle bottles, cans, paper and other materials.
- Never burn trash or other man-made materials.
- Reduce use of gasoline-powered lawn equipment. Use hand or electric-powered yard equipment. On Air Quality Action Days, wait until after 6 pm to use gas-powered lawn equipment.



At Work

- Take your lunch rather than eating out.
- Walk rather than drive to lunch.
- Consider joining a car or van pool, riding your bicycle, or riding the bus to work.
- Turn off lights and computers when not in use.
- Recycle waste paper, printer cartridges and other materials.
- Copy and print double-sided when possible.

Helping you breathe easy ... for life

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